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Plea over double dissident murder

By Allison Morris

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Police investigating the dissident republican murders of two men have reissued an appeal for information on the 12-month anniversary of their deaths.

Joe Jones and Ed Burns were killed in separate incidents on March 12 2007 following a dispute with former associates.

One man, Gerard Mackin (25), has been charged in connection with the double murder in the Republic.

Two other suspects are believed to be at large in the south. The 22-year-old girlfriend of one of those suspects was arrested on Tuesday and held for several hours before being released without charge.

Mr Burns (36) was found shot dead close to the Bog Meadows nature reserve in west Belfast in the early hours after a second man, Damien O'Neill, was brought into the Royal Victoria Hospital suffering from gunshot wounds.

Mr O'Neill directed police to the reserve where the body of Mr Burns, who had been shot in the head, was found.

Later the same morning the badly beaten body of 38-year-old Joe Jones was found in an alleyway off Elmfield Street in Ardoyne, north Belfast.

A taxi belonging to Mr Burns which was used in both killings was spotted by several members of the public later in the day burning at the top of the Ligonel Road on the outskirts of north Belfast.

However, before police could remove the charred remains of the car for examination a scrap dealer is thought to have taken the silver Skoda Octavia which was never recovered.

Senior investigating officer Detective Chief Inspector David Cunningham yesterday made an appeal for information which could lead his team to the men's killers.

"While the investigation into Joseph and Edward's murders is very much live and ongoing, my team believes that there is someone out there who can tell us who is responsible," he said.

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